

# Senators to Question Gates on New Disclosures

By SARA FRITZ, *Times Staff Writer*

WASHINGTON—Senate confirmation of Robert M. Gates as director of the Central Intelligence Agency appeared to be in jeopardy Thursday because the Tower Commission found he permitted the White House to influence an intelligence report analyzing the political situation in Iran.

Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee said Gates, whose nomination already has been challenged by some senators, will be questioned intensely by the panel in a closed hearing next week about the Tower Commission report and

other new disclosures, including his alleged role last November in drafting a false White House chronology of the Iran arms sales.

Sens. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), both members of the Intelligence Committee, which must approve the nomination before it goes to the Senate floor for a vote, predicted that these new developments would make Gates' confirmation even more uncertain than it was before the Tower Commission released its report.

"It is building," Specter said, referring to the opposition to Gates' nomination in the Senate. The new disclosures have had a "pyramiding effect," he said, predicting that a "fair number" of Senate Intelligence Committee members would oppose the nomination by the time the panel meets next week.

The Tower Commission report shows "a whole pattern of concealment" on the part of the CIA, Specter said, and "Gates is involved in the middle of it," while he was a high-level official at the agency. He added that "all of these failures by the director of the CIA [William

J. Casey] bear directly on Mr. Gates."

In May, 1985, according to the commission, White House officials were "actively involved" in the CIA's preparation of a document known as a Special National Intelligence Estimate on Iran, which concluded that the Soviet Union was in a position to capitalize on the instability of the Tehran regime after the death of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Although the commission does not mention his name in connection with the document, Gates at the time was primarily responsible for all intelligence estimates produced by the CIA.

According to the Tower Commission, the evidence suggests that the CIA permitted the views of White House policy-makers to influence the judgment of the agency professionals who prepared the report. Under normal procedures, intelligence reports are the raw material from which policy decisions are made, and the policy-makers have no role in preparing them.

In addition, the commission noted that the intelligence report contains what it described as "the hint that the United States should change its existing policy and encourage its allies to provide arms to Iran." Intelligence estimates prepared by the CIA usually make no policy recommendations.

This mixture of policy and intelligence functions, which normally is prohibited, was viewed with alarm by the Tower Commission.

"It is critical that the line between intelligence and advocacy of a particular policy be preserved if intelligence is to retain its integrity and perform its proper function," the report said. "In this instance, the CIA came close enough to the line to warrant concern."

In testimony before the Intelligence Committee on Feb. 17, Gates was asked by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) whether the CIA in May, 1985, had produced its report "to suit the policy-makers?"

Gates replied: "Not true."

But Bradley appeared unconvinced by Gates' answer.